

Roosevelt Base, Labor Board Building
(Building No. 41)
Corner of Ocean Boulevard and Gate 1

Long Beach
Los Angeles
California

HABS No. CA-2663-J

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROOSEVELT BASE, LABOR BOARD BUILDING (Building No. 41)

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Location: Corner of Ocean Boulevard and Gate 1, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California

USGS Long Beach Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 11.385030.3735700

Significance: The Roosevelt Base Historic District, constructed in 1940-1943, consists of 11 buildings designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival detailing, five structures, and extensive historic landscaping. It is eligible for the National Register for its site planning, landscaping, and architectural style; and for its Associate Architect Paul Williams, a nationally-prominent Los Angeles Afro-American architect. Additionally, the District is significant for its association with the buildup of permanent Naval facilities on the Pacific Coast under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, during the mobilization period preceding the United States' entry into World War II.

Building 41, as the former Labor Board Facility, is significant as a complementary structure to the original Main Gate 1 and Gatehouse 40 on the west. The building's northwest wall is attached to the Main Gate pier. The low-pitched hip roof with red tiles and wide, overhanging eaves are noted elements of the Mediterranean Revival style; and the ribbon windows are noted elements of the International Style. Various changes over time have compromised its architectural integrity.

Description: Exterior. This T-shaped, one-story building, measuring 50' x 81', faces north toward Ocean Boulevard. It is constructed of reinforced concrete on a reinforced concrete pile foundation. The walls are of reinforced concrete, 9" thick, with a 4' x 8' plywood form-board finish painted light brown. The hip roof is covered with red shingle tiles over rolled composition roofing. Four black metal pipe vents project above the roof line. It has overhanging eaves, 4 feet wide, with fixed metal gutters and smooth concrete soffits.

The main entrance on the north side is a modern double metal door, painted red, set in a projecting concrete frame and open to a concrete porch with three shallow steps flanked by concrete piers. On the east end of the north side is a single wood door with an 8"x8" square wire glass pane in its upper section. On the east side is a double steel door, painted red, with rectangular metal louver panes on its bottom section. The south side has a single steel door, painted dark brown, with an 11" x 14" glass upper pane.

The north and south sides of the building have ribbon windows of paired rectangular casement windows in metal sash, set in projecting concrete frames; four paired casement windows are on the north side and seven are on the south side. Each side also has a smaller rectangular casement window. The west side has four paired rectangular casement windows in metal sash. The east side has no windows. A metal canopy, supported by one pipe and two square hollow metal posts, extends over the south bank of windows.

Interior. The interior of Building 41 consists of a single floor with a gross total area of 2,310 square feet. The floor is divided into a foyer and eight rooms: four offices, storage and transformer rooms, and two bathrooms. The flooring consists of linoleum tiles with black rubber baseboards. The interior walls are of smooth concrete plaster, painted white, and the ceilings have rectangular fluorescent lights set in a dropped acoustic ceiling. Five projecting window sills, 15" deep, are covered with dark wood-grained formica.

Alterations. Exterior alterations on the north side consists of the replacement of a casement window with a wood door and another casement window with a modern aluminum louvered-paned window in aluminum sash.

On the interior, the original plaster ceiling has been hidden by a dropped acoustic ceiling with inset fluorescent lights. The original built-in seats and desk along the west wall in the large public space room have been removed. Also in this large public room the space heater and entry way to the public toilet have been removed. What is left now is an empty room with only the public toilet, with modern off-white glazed tiled walls. The Janitorial closets by the south door have been removed; a counter with a kitchen sink now occupies the area. The 15"-deep window sills, originally covered with linoleum, have been covered with dark wood-grained formica. The original Civilian Personnel Office to south of the public space remains unaltered.

Most of the alterations have been to the east wing of the building. According to Architectural drawing #18670, this wing was partitioned with plaster and wood walls into five different offices circa 1960 when the building use changed to the Naval Station's Police and Armory Division. The five rooms were again altered circa 1987 when the use changed to Fire Prevention and Safety. Partition walls to four of the rooms were removed. Also the women's toilet on the east wing was removed and one of the remaining bathrooms in the public space was remodeled with modern tiles. What is left now in this east wing room is one partitioned small room between the former large public space (west wing) and the east wing. The east wing room, a large open space originally called a General room, is now empty, and if it were not for the small room separating it from the east wing room, one could say that the

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series of alterations over the decades has returned the room almost to its original state. Building 41 closed in 1994.

Surroundings. Building 41 is surrounded on the north by Ocean Boulevard and the original Main Gate 1, and to the west by Gatehouse 40 and a small parking lot. On the east side is a parking lot and buildings 45 and 46, and to the south is an open grassy area with mature trees.

Historical Context: Building 41 was built in 1942 at the cost of \$36,810. Its construction was part of a plan to provide recreational and administrative facilities for the Pacific Fleet anchored in San Pedro Harbor. The construction of this complex was part of a nation-wide military effort to replace deteriorating World War I temporary buildings with new permanent facilities to attract and retain post-war peacetime forces. Rather than using a standard design from the Bureau of Yards and Docks, the Navy, through Allied Engineers, hired local civilian architects Adrian Wilson and Paul R. Williams. As a result the buildings, designed in the International Style with Mediterranean Revival details, are unique to the Base.

Construction of this complex, named Roosevelt Base, took place between 1940 and 1943, and cost \$18 million, funded by Congressional appropriations. Included were the gymnasium (23), squash/handball courts and locker rooms (22), a swimming pool (233), tennis courts (221), arcade (234), lounge and bowling alley (20), officers' club (24), fleet landing building (10), administration building (1), dispensary (2), fire station (3), central heating plant (4), labor board building (41), gatehouse (40), main gates (gate 1), a net pier (pier 7, structure 126), and extensive landscaping.

Although designed in 1940 as recreation facilities for personnel of the Pacific Fleet, the complex was not used initially for this purpose. In response to Japan's increasing belligerence toward China, President Roosevelt, (for whom the Base was named) ordered the fleet from San Pedro Bay to Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii to serve as a deterrence and warning. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Base was rushed to completion; new temporary barracks were constructed, and the facilities were used during World War II as support for a Small Craft Training Center and as the administrative center of the Naval Operating Base in Long Beach.

New employees came to Building 41, the Labor Board building, to be photographed and to receive passes for themselves and their automobiles. There was a parking lot outside the building, by the main entrance on Seaside Avenue (now Ocean Boulevard). Additional parking for employees was across the boulevard in private lots. The Labor Board building has had various uses; circa 1960 it became the

Naval Station's Police and Armory Division, and circa 1987 it became the Fire Prevention and Safety offices. It closed in 1994 and is vacant.

After World War II the facilities, renamed Naval Station Long Beach, were used to support the U.S. Navy ships' personnel either homeported in Long Beach or in drydock for repairs at the adjacent Naval Shipyard. In 1991 the Naval Station was listed for closure as part of the national Base Re-Use and Closure activities as the Department of Defense downsized with the end of the Cold War. In 1994 the Base officially closed, although a number of buildings are still in use.

Sources:

Architectural drawings #18670, #18672, #18673, #18674, #18675, #22979 are located at Building 300, Long Beach Naval Shipyard archives. The original drawings are dated November 11, 1941. The alterations date to 1960 and 1982.

Archiplan Urban Design Collaborative. 1987. *Terminal Island Long Beach Naval Complex, Long Beach, California: Update of Engineering Evaluation for Naval Station: Long Beach, California*. Revised April 1988, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Long Beach Naval Station. Contract N624-86-C-5263.

Manley, William, Carson Anderson, and Susan M. Hector. 1994. *Historical and Architectural Assessment - Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California*. San Diego, California. Contract Number N68711-92-M-4893.

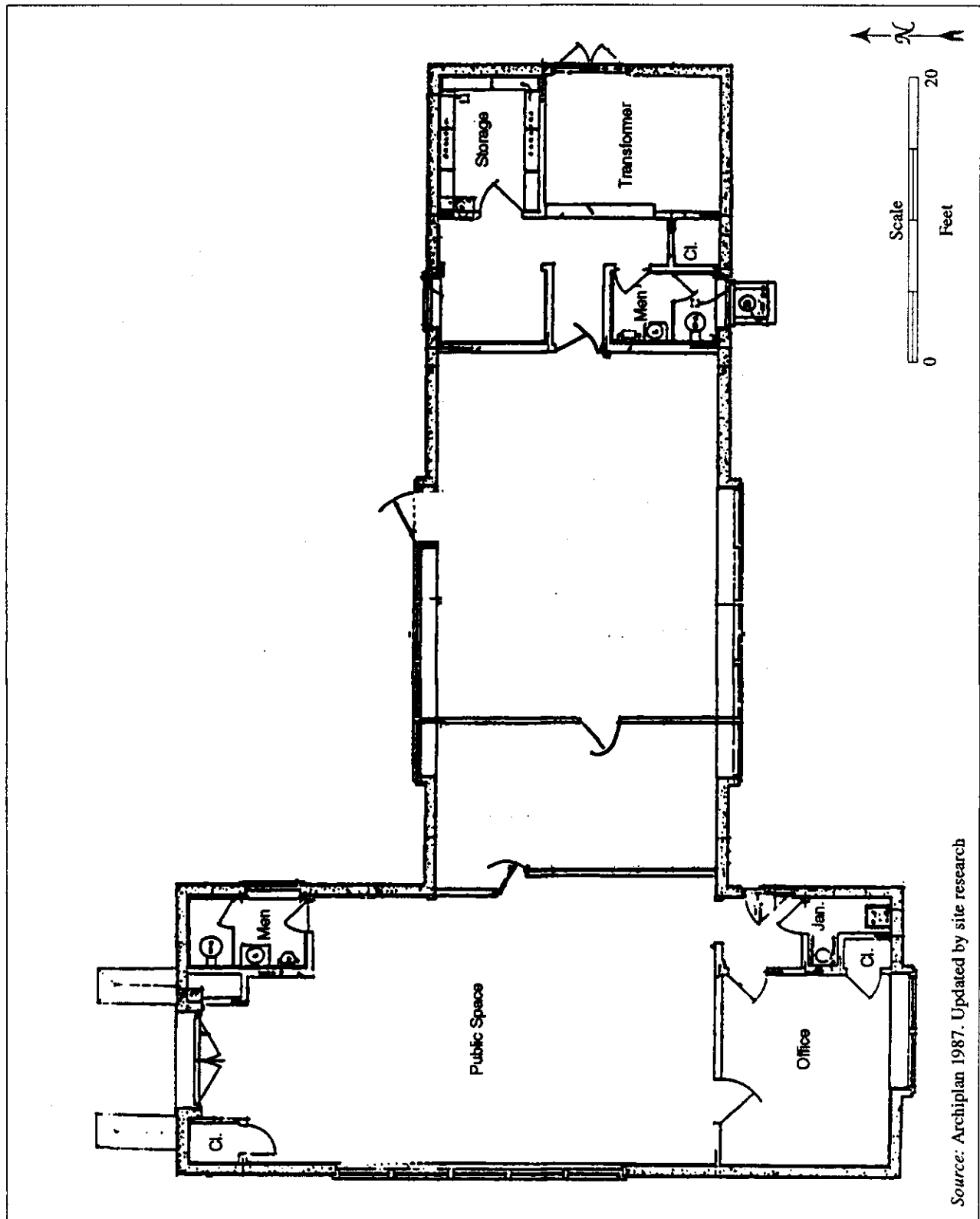
Property Record Card: NAV. S. and A. Form 277

"Roosevelt Naval Base, Terminal Island: Headquarters of The Naval Operating Base, Terminal Island, Long Beach Harbor." 1944. *Architectural Record* May: 58-70.

Todd Erickson. Interview with Alexandra C. Cole, 29 March 1996, Naval Station Long Beach, Long Beach, California.

Project Information: This HABS documentation project was undertaken as a mitigative recording required by the Memorandum of Agreement, dated _____ 1996, signed by the City of Long Beach, the California State Preservation Officer and the Navy. The Navy proposes to transfer the Naval Station property to the City of Long Beach. The City, through the Port of Long Beach, plans to demolish all the buildings and structures on Roosevelt Base for a container terminal.

The documentation was prepared by Alexandra C. Cole, SAIC, Santa Barbara, architectural historian, and Fermina B. Murray, historian, in May 1996. Large-format photography was done by William B. Dewey of Santa Barbara, California, in April 1996.



LAYOUT OF BUILDING 41. 1996

Source: Archiplan 1987. Updated by site research